

The Home, The School and The Middle Class :  
Paternal Narratives of Child Rearing in Fujin  
no tomo, 1908-1926

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# THE HOME, THE SCHOOL AND THE MIDDLE CLASS

## PATERNAL NARRATIVES OF CHILD REARING IN *FUJIN NO TOMO*, 1908-26

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In 1916 a female author of foreign origin spoke of “good husbands and wise fathers” (*ryōfu kenpu*) when discussing masculinity in a Japanese women’s magazine. In adaptation of the “good wife and wise mother” (*ryōsai kenbo*) ideal taught in Japanese schools, she attributed goodness and wisdom to both women and men, thereby stressing their similarity as spouses and parents. She rejected the notion that children’s education was exclusively the mother’s responsibility and encouraged paternal interaction with children of all ages, admonishing men not to face their offspring as stiff and strict fathers. She even invoked the need for Fathers’ Groups (*chichi no kai*) and praised the model of American parenting associations. While supporting fathers’ child rearing activities, she discouraged mothers’ participation in politics such as the suffrage movement. Motherhood, to her, was the most significant female task and she urged women to focus their energies on raising boys to become men of standing in society and “good husbands and wise fathers.”<sup>1</sup> Both her calls for homebound femininity and her prescriptions for male domestic activities stressed the value of child rearing.

In contrast to its counterpart for wives and mothers, the epithet of the “good husbands and wise fathers” never caught on in Japan.<sup>2</sup> The isolated and exceptional occurrence of the above expression, however, raises the question of whether and which alternative ideals were formulated to define men’s role as members of their families. Despite recent research on the history of masculinity in Japan, we still know little about popular constructions of fatherhood and even less about paternal behavior. This paper combines both elements by looking at ideas about fatherhood as they emerge from the narratives of well-known male intellectuals writing “as fathers” on their involvement in child rearing and their attitudes to their children’s education.

This study of fatherhood analyzes the contents of a women’s magazine. What at first glance may appear an odd choice for an exploration of an aspect of masculinity becomes understandable when considering that after the turn of the twentieth century discussions of the issues of the home, family, and childrearing diminished in general-interest magazines, but were increasingly covered by more specialized publications such as women’s magazines (Muta 1994: 61-64). One of the first was *Katei no tomo* (Home Companion), established in 1903. Renamed *Fujin no tomo* (A Woman’s Companion) in 1908, it preceded the surge of women’s mass magazines occurring from the late 1910s.<sup>3</sup> Compared to later market leader *Shufu no tomo* (A Housewife’s Companion), which in 1931 reported a circulation of 600,000, *Fujin no*

*tomo* had fewer but more affluent readers as is revealed through model household accounts for housewives printed in the two magazines. *Fujin no tomo* readers belonged or aspired to what scholars often call the new middle class, mainly addressing families of white collar professionals like employees of government agencies, corporations or educational institutions, while neglecting farmers or the self-employed (Saitô, 1988: 72, 118).

*Fujin no tomo* articles featured men mostly in their roles as future, current, and former husbands, presumably to satisfy the preferences of a largely adult female readership. Articles about men as fathers (or sons) appeared irregularly. In some years no article on either was published. In contrast, there were frequent and recurrent articles and letters to the editor on motherhood and parenting.<sup>4</sup> Motherhood was clearly about women, but parenting may not have been to the same extent. In *Fujin no tomo* two terms for parents were commonly used: *Oya*, implying "parent" without any explicit gender connotation, and *fubo*, literally translated as "father and mother."<sup>5</sup> Particularly conspicuous is the interchangeable use of both terms, often in the same article. There is no evidence to suggest that the later term emphasized fathers more than the former. Depending on the context, these terms for parents were sometimes used only for mothers or fathers. This examination of fatherhood in *Fujin no tomo* discusses articles published between 1908 and 1926 with explicit references made to fathers in their titles.<sup>6</sup> It pays particular attention to men's description of their own attitudes and behavior as fathers, in an effort to broaden the scope of research on fatherhood in Japan, which has often relied on prescriptive literature, depictions of fathers by their children, and, last not least, case studies of exceptionally involved fathers.

The issues of *Fujin no tomo* of March 1916 and of March 1926 included fatherhood sections with about half a dozen articles each. In both issues well-known male intellectuals wrote on the duties and activities of fathers in child rearing. In 1916, men reflected on their attitudes towards and experiences with their children. These fathers had a common background. Born between the mid-1860s and late 1870s, they ranged in age between about forty and fifty. Even more than their age, they shared a life trajectory of migration from the provinces to the capital city to become eminent intellectuals in various fields such as journalism, scholarship, and politics. Most obtained their higher education in Tokyo and several studied overseas in Germany, England, and the United States. Three men were elected to the Lower House of the Imperial Diet by the late 1920s.<sup>7</sup> The men writing on fatherhood in 1926 belonged to the same generation as the men who wrote in 1916 and were urban professionals, just like the first group of fathers. The majority had also come from the prefectures to obtain their higher education in Tôkyô. Slight differences in the life-courses of both groups are visible. In the second group only one person joined a university faculty permanently, no one studied overseas or became a Diet member, and writing for publication may have been more important to support their livelihood.<sup>8</sup> Despite their similar birth dates, life-courses, and professions, their depictions of fatherhood were not homogeneous, even within the two groups. Nevertheless, some similarities within the groups of men writing in 1916 and 1926, as well as a shift in emphasis from

1916 to 1926 can be noted.

Men's narratives of their child rearing activities characterize the *Fujin no tomo* articles on fatherhood of 1916, which were published under the headline, "What should fathers do?" Several fathers described the interactions with their children in terms of companionship and play, calling themselves interlocutors (*sôdan aite*) and playmates (*asobi aite*) of their children. The authors of 1926 were much less personal in their depictions of fatherhood, which were grouped in a section titled, "Thinking as fathers." Instead of referring to fathers as playmates and interlocutors of their children, they focussed on paternal duties of training and education to assure their children's success in life. The view of children shifted from playmates in 1916 to future adults in need of parental guidance by 1926.

In 1916, fathers singled out several occasions and places for companionship and play. Meals were a crucial venue for both. It will not come as a surprise that the scholar Hayakawa Tetsuji, who aspired to be a model (*tehon*) for his children and to take care of them first thing "in the morning and evening," would never come home late, "because the children were waiting without having eaten" (Hayakawa 1916: 30-32). Evenings were precious to him: "After dinner we all gather and play the piano, sing songs, and talk. We enjoy friendly conversations (*shinboku zatsudan*), and I associate (*sekkin*) much with my children ... At eight I give them a bath and put them to bed." But even fathers who professed to put little effort into child rearing participated in mealtime play. The biologist Okaasa Jirô claimed that specialized work consumed so much time and energy for fathers that they were "not doing anything for their children" (Okaasa 1916: 35-36). Nevertheless, according to his account, he usually talked or played with his children after the evening meal, "because what I do for the children is not clearly decided. I just become their playmate (*asobi aite*)."<sup>9</sup> The main reason for the journalist and politician Tagawa Daikichirô to feel sorry for his children was his frequent absence during meals (Tagawa 1916: 24-27). Although he assured his readers that he would never visit tea-houses or have affairs with women, Tagawa still confessed that he barely made it home two to three times a week for the evening meal. Even those meals were rarely with his children, however, since his return was often so late that the children had already eaten dinner, and in the mornings he overslept their breakfast. As a result, he pondered whether a person with his behavior really deserved to be called a "father" (*chichi*). He expressed shame and promised to make a fresh start. *Fujin no tomo* fathers adhered to the ideal of father-child play around mealtime. This was the least their children could expect of them. Wives could also demand this minimum fathering activity from their husbands.<sup>10</sup> In a long article on the love between parents and children, the editor of *Fujin no tomo*, Hani Motoko rebuked fathers: "Frequently fathers are so busy with work that have they no time to be together with their children even once a day at the evening meal" (Hani 1918: 5).<sup>11</sup> This single reference to fathers' parenting in terms of their absence at dinner, may have served to reinforce the readerships' expectations of the presence of fathers at this main event of family togetherness.

Another important routine paternal activity was physical exercise with their children,



usually in the form of walks in the suburbs on Sundays. The scholar Uchigasaki Sakusaburô stressed the development of children's healthy bodies in a natural environment (Uchigasaki 1916: 37-39). If parents cannot live in the countryside, he said, they should strive for an elevated residence separated from the city with much sunshine, a large garden, and a playground (*asobiba*) for children. Among his own activities to promote their health was to take walks with his children in the suburbs during summer evenings. He consciously avoided the influence of the lower-class urban downtown: "I have a policy not to take them to the *shitamachi* at all." Okaasa Jirô took regular walks in the countryside on Sundays after a train-ride of up to one hour, an outing that usually entailed modern snacks such as sandwiches at rest-places. Abe Isoo, social democrat, Christian, and educator emphasized his particular duty of the physical training of his seven children, and took regular walks with them on Sundays.<sup>12</sup> More than the evening meal, walks with children seemed to depend on the particular preferences of the fathers encouraging this activity. Abe Isoo, for example, is also known as an early promoter of baseball at Waseda University. It is also questionable whether walking included the entire family in the same way as the common meal. None of the above fathers mentioned their wives when talking about their walks with their children. Even some of the children could have been excluded depending on their ages, as fathers said that they varied the distances according to whether they took the older or the younger children.<sup>13</sup>

With more or less enthusiasm, fathers shared other hobbies with children in the cultural fields of literature and exhibitions, painting and piano, songs and poetry. They presented these activities in terms of recreation and amusement (Uchigasaki 1916: 37-39). More than other fathers Uchigasaki Sakusaburô sought father-child intimacy in the common enjoyment of painting and music. His children developed interests in painting, he said, when painter friends visited and left some of their works. One child even tried to imitate water-color painting. A taste for music was acquired by the children when the family received a piano from relatives; "By their own will" they exerted themselves, sang and had fun playing the piano "without learning the rules correctly". Doctor of Literature Sasaki Nobutsuna, who was rather taciturn on the subject of his role in raising his children, indulged in his memories of singing together with his doting father and also enjoyed discussions of songs and poetry with children of other people (Sasaki 1916: 33-34).

As many of the fathers were scholars and most had risen to their current status in part due to their higher education, a certain level of concern for the schooling or educational progress of their children could have been expected, but fathers did not show much interest in this regard. While Abe Isoo mentioned the education (*gakumon*) of his children as a subject of discussion with his wife, his primary concern was to teach "actual problems of politics, economy, and society to boys and girls." Tagawa Daikichirô was not informed on his children's schooling. When he had to go to the middle school for a consultation on grades, he only learned the name of the teacher in charge on the morning before his visit. Moreover, he criticized other parents (*fukei*) for their excessive educational ambitions (*kyôiku nesshin*), which made them

hire private teachers to train their children after school. Sasaki Nobutsuna admitted that it was essentially the schoolteachers who were raising his children. He regretted never to have found much time to teach the many children he produced at an early age (Sasaki 1916: 33-34). None of the fathers claimed the supervision of children's studies as their domain.

While paternal play and companionship were recurrent themes, paternal strictness was almost taboo. Only one father even mentioned strictness, and he did so in the context of finding a balance between the two extremes of excessively strict (*gen*) supervision (*kantoku*) of children and complete non-interference (*mukanshōshugi*). Until about high school children needed guidance, he said, and freedom and non-interference (*hōnin*) should not be confused. Even the only author condoning firm paternal attitudes rejected excessive strictness as counter-productive in child rearing. In teaching their children, fathers stressed persuasion and enthusiasm, not threat and punishment.

Fathers kept their wives, who were the mothers of their children, invisible in their articles so that little about their attitudes to marriage and motherhood can be inferred. State and society also formed no significant point of reference in their rather private discussions of fatherhood. In contrast to the majority of fathers, Abe Isoo talked about his cooperation with his wife, as her assistant (*joshu*) and her interlocutor (*sōdan aite*). The influence of unequal family relations on national politics worried Abe. He blamed the lack of constitutional (*rikkenteki*) politics in Japan on the power imbalance in the Japanese home (*katei*), where the father (*oya*) held rights over wife and children.<sup>14</sup> His democratic attitude extended to all family members: "In my home there is equality between parents and children and between husband and wife" (Abe 1916: 27-30).

Only Hayakawa Tetsuji, a single father ever since his wife left him a year ago "to recover from a disease," referred to housework as his paternal duty (Hayakawa 1916: 30-32). Calling himself the main caretaker (*moriyaku*) of his children, he depicted his leadership in the morning routine as general supervisor (*sōkantoku*). Getting up at five every morning, he gave all family members over fifteen a task in the house. He himself swept transom and lintel and afterwards inspected each room giving out praise and criticism. Most of the cleaning was done by five thirty "since we live in a relatively simple house." "At six we get out of the bath, and we all eat breakfast together, at seven those who go to school leave, and I go, too." His unusually detailed description of a father's housework was subtitled: "Even the morning cleaning we do together." While the concrete aim was to regularly clean the house, the more important issue was the creation of a feeling of family togetherness by sharing a common task under the father's direction. The heading further implied that this was usually not a common family activity, at least not one requiring paternal participation. Single fatherhood may have lead Hayakawa to assume responsibilities often associated with motherhood. Within the *Fujin no tomo* group of fathers he was exceptional insofar as he discussed practical matters of his daughters' education, which he called Western style. Before his daughters married, he urged them to participate in housework to become diligent and practical, especially with money. If an

amount was left over from the monthly sum they were given to manage home affairs (*kasei*), they were to keep this as their income. His interpretation of Western style excluded the possibility of his daughters imitating “new women” (*atarashii onna*), whom he criticized as obsessed with outward appearances and ignoring the realities of life. The mother’s absence failed to induce the father to assume all her housework duties. Hayakawa’s oldest unmarried daughter, aged 19, became the mother’s substitute (*dairi*) and did all the housework (*kaji issai*), including mending her father’s clothes.

Despite individual variations and exceptions, what is striking in the paternal narratives of 1916 is their emphasis on the enjoyment of father-child bonding, fostering family togetherness. This image was not limited to paternal narratives but extended to other articles in *Fujin no tomo* in the 1910s. One of the most detailed was an article by Hatoyama Haruko (1910), a well-known writer on women’s education. Fathers assumed no responsibilities, she lamented, except in their roles as providers.<sup>15</sup> She urged more paternal involvement and companionship of fathers with their children. The intimacy between mothers and children, always considered natural, pushed fathers to the side, which she regretted for both fathers and children. Hatoyama encouraged mothers and children to engage fathers as friends (*tomodachi*) of their children. To her, the best time and place for the display of fatherly affection and caretaking (*mendô*) was the daily evening bath. After their return from work, she said, fathers in many families gave children a bath. The deeper purpose of entrusting this routine ritual to fathers was to facilitate conversations with their children, so that they listened to each other. This diversion with their loveable (*airashiki*) children made fathers taste the joys (*tanoshimi*) of home life (Hatoyama 1910: 185-186).

In contrast to the paternal enjoyment of children in the 1910s, the 1920s were marked by men’s worry about their children’s future, a concern which made schooling an overarching theme in *Fujin no tomo*’s special section of 1926. The conflict between the essence of childhood and the demands of adulthood was central to the ruminations of the writer Tokuda Shûsei. He wondered whether children’s purity (*junryô*) and charm (*aikyô*) as humans was an obstacle to their growing up to be great adults (*eraku naru*). He felt uncomfortable with the system of education, calling it utilitarian (*kôriteki*), because the academic selection process favored smart students, who became even smarter by enrolling in better schools. Still, Tokuda professed an understanding for these educational policies, when thinking “about the future (*zento*) of these young people sent into a world of severe competition for their livelihood (Tokuda 1926: 25-26). Ogawa Mimei, a writer of children’s stories, was worried about his daughter’s secondary school education. She was about to graduate from elementary school, and he wanted her to enroll in a private women’s school. The school of his choice, however, had many applicants and few spaces available. As a result, students had no hope of getting accepted unless they possessed special connections. Moreover, this popular school charged a high tuition. In the remainder of his article Ogawa endorsed public elementary schools as a place where children of all classes could mingle innocently (*junjô*) “without knowledge of

[each other's] family circumstances" learning about life in a fantasy (*mugen*) (Ogawa 1926: 12-14).

Tsuchita Kyôson's account of a father's education (*chichi no kyôiku*) was also obsessed with the issue of schooling (Tsuchita 1926: 15-20). Just like Ogawa he discussed his children's educational prospects, but in even a more anxious tone. Questioning the effects of heredity, he pointed to the differences between himself and his children in intelligence and appearance, contrasting his exceptional gifts with the mediocrity of his children. Claiming never to have made his parents worry about his school performance, Tsuchita boasted that from the age of three or four he started to draw pictures and at age eleven people called him a genius (*tensai*), because of his works in the style of the grand artists. Twice in the article he bragged never to have prepared or reviewed for school at home, always leaving his books at school. Still, he received perfect scores, and was at the top of his class. By contrast, his children showed no special talents and those in school ranked somewhere in the middle of their class. He and his wife worried about their children's prospects of entering middle school, and about whether they as parents were defective or at fault.

Tsuchita's educational principles conflicted with his ambitions for his children's education. On one hand, he advocated that children should develop their abilities at their own pace. He was determined not to be disappointed by his children or to provide them with special education, which would infringe on social fairness (*shakaiteki kôsei*). To let unqualified children receive a high level of education, to him, was not true love (*hontô no ai*). On the other hand, a university education seemed necessary to him regardless of his children's talents or inclinations, and whether they desired to become farmers or poets. He rationalized these contradictions by explaining that children should be given the opportunity to manifest their talents, but that "at age five or ten it is impossible to foresee the future of children." Nevertheless, Tsuchita emphasized that the development of children needed to come from within, even if many adults would rather influence children according to their own ideals. apply their own strengths.

More than the other fathers, Tsuchita presented himself as an expert on current trends in school education, debating progressive ideas of education which only became widely known in Japan after World War II. He opposed the "so-called new education" for its excessive encouragement of schoolwork, as it was reflected in the "stupid pride" a school took in making its students read as many books as possible in a year. To his relief, he discerned a backlash to this "education of pay for results" (*kekka ni taisuru shiharai kyôiku*). In particular, Tsuchita criticized the educational philosophy of the Dalton-plan, which was "at one time popular" in Japan. Its ideas, which stressed children's study according to yearly assignments, he labeled contract work (*ukeoi shigoto*), derived from an American-style slave-wage society (*chingin dôrei shakai*). For him, the Dalton plan presented no real breakthrough in education.<sup>16</sup> Again and again, he condemned "new education" (*shin kyôiku*) for cramming students with massive amounts of indigestible material and attempting to compartmentalize the children's minds by

grading them according to each minute subject. By endorsing a school of education named after the German philosopher Eduard Spranger, he further demonstrated his familiarity with educational trends in Japan.<sup>17</sup> In his concluding appeal to parents (*fukei*), he advocated a shift in education “from result to creation” in order to support civilization (*bunmei*) and improve the people.

In contrast to the image, in 1916, of playful enjoyment of the arts in paternal companionship, a discussion of the role of the arts in 1926 emphasized the training children’s faculties of appreciation. German literature scholar Chino *Shôshô* professed to think about his children’s education in terms of a fine arts education. Among current educational theories practiced in schools, he supported the movement for free drawing (*jiyûkaki*), which he saw as an improvement over conventional mechanical (*kikaiteki*) methods. Similarly, he discussed institutional fine arts education in schools such as in music, poetry, novels, distinguishing between fine arts and superficial arts and crafts (*gigei*). Chino’s article sounds like that of an educator engaging in a philosophical argument with a specialist audience. Only at the end, he finally mentioned the home. Since understanding fine arts contributed to a taste of life, he said, this should also be a duty of the home (*katei no ninmu*) — and a crucial task of the housewife (*shufu*) (Chino 1926: 21–24). When Chino argued from the viewpoint of a father, he came up with a philosophy of education to be implemented by mothers. In his eyes, fathers only had an indirect connection to their children.

Despite their emphasis on academic performance and training, the *Fujin no tomo* fathers of 1926 agreed that there was more to childrearing than educational success measured by grades. Similar to the fathers of 1916, men invoked nature as an ideal place to raise children. Tsuchita Kyôson felt sorry for his children (Tsuchita 1926: 18). Indulging in a nostalgic recollection of his own childhood, he fondly recalled the character of his hometown, surrounded by mountains and the sea, a natural environment his children were missing. Even floating boats made of bamboo leaves in a river running through the nearby fields was too dangerous as the children might catch an infectious disease. He assumed that city children must be thoroughly unhappy (*fukô*) as a result of this deprivation caused by a defect of modern civilization (*kindai bunmei*). Self-critically, Tsuchita acknowledged not to have made a great effort to leave the city for the sake of his children. Considering his children’s future, he doubted if this was a wise decision.

An article by the philosopher Miyake Yûjirô preceded the 1926 special on fatherhood. Despite including the innovative term fatherhood (*fusei*) in his title, which in contrast to motherhood (*bosei*) was rarely used in Taishô Japan, Miyake looked backward for models of behavior.<sup>18</sup> He interpreted the life stories of male heroes of Rome (Caligula), France (Napoleon I) and Japan (Saigô Takamori) to prove his point that on the whole the mothers’ influence on children’s lives was larger than the fathers’ and that children were usually closer to their mothers (Miyake 1926: 9–11). Compared to the other authors, Miyake’s vision of fatherhood was the most timeless and placeless.

In 1926, when “thinking as fathers,” men neglected to describe their own activities with their children. One rare exception was Tsuchita Kyôson, who illustrated his practical teaching at home using the example of a daily task like handling the mail (Tsuchita 1926: 19-20). The many parcels and letters delivered to his house, induced the children to frequently play with the mail, unwrapping magazines and untying the strings from books. When he was cancelling stamps, the children imitated him, thereby easily gaining an accurate knowledge about handling mail.

Age may have been one of the reasons for the silence of the second group of men about their own fathering activities. Some of the 1926 authors had already reached the customary retirement age for household headship such as Miyake Yûjirô at sixty-six. At thirty-five the youngest writer of the group, Tsuchita Kyôson, informed the readers of the ages and gender of his three children. “I am certainly a father. My eldest son is seven, my second son is five, and my eldest daughter is four.” The context for Tsuchita’s discussion of his children was his regret that his boys were raised in his wife’s natal home for a while, before coming to live under his roof (Tsuchita 1926: 15). Age alone is not a sufficient explanation as even the fifty-seven year old Tokuda Shûsei revealed: “I am the father of six children, ranging in age from a boy who is currently receiving higher education to a small girl who has just entered elementary school.” Tokuda stressed their individuality, that is, their differences in “build and character,” and in their essential qualities (*honshitsu*). As a father, however, he loved them equally (Tokuda 1926: 25-26).

Since the number of articles by fathers on fatherhood in *Fujin no tomo* was small, the contrast in the paternal narratives which were separated by only a decade may not appear to have broad social significance. Most other *Fujin no tomo* articles mentioning “father” in their title, both fiction and non-fiction, were written from the perspective of the child as is shown by the following chronological enumeration: “My girlhood when I opposed my father’s opinion” (Hiraoka 1917: 22-25), “Breaking father’s death admonitions” (Masako 1918: 86-88), “Learning about father’s death from the newspaper” (Murasaki 1920: 64-65), “To father and mother” (Unnamed 1921: 67-77), “Father and stepmother” (Sakurai 1923: 205-214), “Until father’s hour of death” (Koike 1924: 107-111), “Father’s return” (Mino 1924: 29-32), “Father’s letter” (Kawata 1925: 2-6). Among the remaining contributions, only a few were written by men reflecting on their own attitudes and behavior as fathers. Two articles stand out. In 1909, an unidentified male author wondered about paternal influence on children. While he acknowledged the primary importance of mothers for infants, as children grew, he saw an enlarged impact of fathers, especially as a male role model for boys. Since children imitated the words and deeds of “the master of the house, that is the father,” men should be very careful about their own behavior at home. When the author was appalled at his eight year-old son’s arrogant attitude toward his mother, he realized that his son was merely imitating his own rough speech toward his wife. Fathers’ bad examples, he feared, could distort innocent (*mujaki na*) children. Children’s innocent admiration, however, was also an opportunity for fathers to act as a model



and teacher. Fathers' self-improvement as a key to successful child rearing was also stressed by the author's rhetorical question, "More than educating our children, isn't it necessary to first educate ourselves?" References to the necessity of piety, cultivation, and devotion as the means to turn children into good people reinforced the impression of child rearing as an almost religious mission. Morality and modern science informed the author's discussion when he extolled home education (*katei kyôiku*). In contrast to school education, this was about the parent's personality molding children and the importance of genetic heredity (*iden*), which implied a parent's responsibility (Bôshi 1909: 255-57).

The second narrative, published in 1920 by novelist Nagayo Yoshirô in the style of a letter, focused on family (*famiri*) consciousness fostered by the birth of children. Although Nagayo ruminated about the dangers of delivering a child, past and present, and expressed a father's feelings of trepidation and expectation when attending the birth of a child, relations between husband and wife were more important to him. Admitting that newlyweds loved each other, he sensed a growing boredom and unrest as time passed, which to him seemed especially pronounced in women. The mere arrival of babies, he claimed, lead to truly deepened conjugal relations.<sup>19</sup> The moral behavior of fathers, and the love between the parents were the overarching themes in the two paternal narratives, both entirely ignoring the previously discussed issues of play or school education.<sup>20</sup>

A shift in *Fujin no tomo*'s editorial policy, as it expanded its readership base in the 1920s may have contributed to the aforementioned contrast between the 1910s and the 1920s. In the early years of *Fujin no tomo*, Hani Motoko, its founding editor supported the creation of a democratic home based on mutual respect between the spouses, criticizing self-centered and despotic men, emphasizing women's practical and emotional independence (Saitô 1988: 95-100). More elitist and idealist in the beginning, the magazine later tried to include more mainstream ideas.

As previously mentioned, the authors' age and a shift in the magazine's editorial policy can be pointed to as reasons for the differences in the perceptions of fatherhood in *Fujin no tomo*. Nevertheless, and in spite of the small number of fathers writing on fatherhood, the contrast between the narratives of 1916 and 1926 may still mirror larger shifts in notions of the paternal role. The predominance of paternal play with children as seen in *Fujin no tomo* during the 1910s also appeared in contemporary child rearing manuals. Hatoyama Haruko,<sup>21</sup> whom we have already encountered as a *Fujin no tomo* author encouraging paternal intimacy with children, published a popular advice book in 1919. Hatoyama advocated an ideal of parenting, that she named "loving father, strict mother" (*jifu, genbo*) (Hatoyama 1919: 107), and which was based on a sexual division of labor: the mother as teacher, the father as playmate (*asobi aite* or *asobi nakama*). Drawing on the experience of her own family, Hatoyama wrote: the most important task of the father with regard to his children and the happiness of the family was to played with the children and keep in touch with them as much as possible. The mother's task, in contrast, was the supervision of children's studies (Hatoyama 1919: 104).

Fatherhood in this advice book on child rearing resembles the images in *Fujin no tomo* and confirms previous scholarly interpretations that in the 1910s fathers were perceived as playmates of children (Sawayama 1991: 125-160).

Characterizations of paternal activities as irrelevant idle play deserve some scrutiny, since the significance of paternal play to the fathers, their wives and children is not yet fully understood. If playfulness meant loss of paternal power in the family, what did its male promoters hope to gain for themselves and their families? One of the keys to unraveling this issue resides in one common trait of fathers at play — their shared status as white-collar professionals. Besides supporting emotional family ties by relaxing at home and enjoying companionship, fathers also instructed their children about the wider world outside of the home and the school, whether by talking about society and politics, or arts and music. As fathers with the means to live in comfortable residences and sufficient leisure to stroll in the suburbs with their children on Sundays, these men displayed a new middle class status and transmitted the accompanying values and behavior to their children.

The personal background of the *Fujin no tomo* fathers of 1926 was comparable with that of the fathers of 1916 in terms of age, education and socioeconomic circumstances, but they did not present themselves as enjoying their middle class status with their children in leisure, companionship, and play. Instead, their narrative was overshadowed by growing concern about their children's potential educational failure and anxiety over their children's success in life. Even in their frequent criticism of the educational system for its exclusive emphasis on intellectual abilities and for its excessive demands, the centrality of schooling and training in paternal narratives is remarkable. This obsession with the children's future is informed by fathers' perception of the world as a highly competitive place, leaving no space for discussions of their engagement with their children in terms of play.

The shift in emphasis in the paternal narratives from play to schooling in *Fujin no tomo* was accompanied by changes in the system of education, and the socioeconomic status of urban middle class professionals. The competitiveness of the system of education increased in the early twentieth century. Popular demand for higher education outpaced the growth in the number of schools, especially during the 1910s and 1920s. The ratio of applicants to the number of those accepted in higher schools, for example, rose from 4.3 in 1910 to 10.5 in 1926.<sup>22</sup> While higher education became more competitive, better schooling became a precondition for obtaining the status of urban professional whether through employment or marriage. Together with the stiffening competition in schools, the world of urban middle class professional families seemed less secure by the mid-1920s after several years of drastic economic reversals, the Great Kantô Earthquake, and urban riots. Moreover, by the early 1920s social problems had become associated with the cities, public attention focussing on the destitution of the working poor and increased participation of workers in labor unions (Garon 1997: 10-11). As the middle class expanded, it felt more threatened from below.

This article showed that increased competition for education and at the workplace was



reflected in the narratives of middle class fathers in *Fujin no tomo* during the Taishô period. It is also one of the first studies to explore a group of men in Japanese history with regard to their self-perceptions as fathers (Fuess 1997: 381-397). As these male authors contributed to magazine specials on fathers, their ideals of parenting all revealed a certain interest in children even when they were not always able to follow through in practice. While the attitudes of fathers ranged from those who professed that "it was best to do nothing" to those who set-up detailed guidelines on housework and education, they often presented their various fathering philosophies as in the best interest of the child. When one starts to listen to men, or fathers in their own voice, just as women's history scholars have encouraged us to do for women, popular clichés of uncaring, stern patriarchs selfishly towering over their children become much less convincing as an accurate depiction of men's roles in child rearing. In the same way, the implications of increased paternal physical absence from home accompanying the spread of wage work and urbanization need to be reconsidered. After all, the salaried status of urban middle class professionals did not prevent the *Fujin no tomo* fathers from enjoying their leisure with their children or planning their education.

#### NOTES

- 1 Boorusu Fujin, "Ryôfu kenpu to katei no seiketsu to," *Fujin no tomo*, 5 May 1916, vol.10 no.5 pp.46-49. As her comparative references are to the United States, she was probably of American nationality. It is not without irony that the rare usage of the term of "good husbands and wise fathers" was by a woman who confessed that her Japanese was deficient.
- 2 In the magazine *Shin shin fujin* (The New True Woman) two Japanese authors, for example, condemned the lack of an ideal of "good husband and wise father," corresponding to the female role model. Ulrike Wöhr, *Frauen zwischen Rollenerwartungen und Selbstdeutung: Ehe, Mutterschaft und Liebe im Spiegel der japanischen Frauenzeitschrift Shin shin fujin von 1913 bis 1916* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997), pp.214, 336.
- 3 The magazine, which began as *Katei no tomo* (Home Companion) in 1903, was later renamed *Katei jogaku kôgi* (Home Study for Women), and in January 1908 became *Fujin no tomo*. Saitô Michiko, *Hani Motoko — shôgai to shisô* (Tôkyô: Domesu Shuppan, 1988), p.78. See also Barbara Hamill Satô in this volume for a characterization of women's magazines.
- 4 A comparable imbalance is found in other women's magazines. A search in the *Shufu no tomo* database for the years 1917-1926 retrieved only three articles with the keyword father (*chichioya*) in contrast to seventy-three with the keyword mother (*hahaoya*). Ishikawa bunka jigô zaidan, Compact Disk "*Shufu no tomo*."
- 5 *Fukei* (father and older brother) with its authoritarian sound or *ryôshin* (both parents) used in pre-war academic writing are terms found to a lesser degree in *Fujin no tomo*.
- 6 I am aware that to ignore the large number of articles on parenting may lead to overemphasis on the differences between fatherhood and motherhood while downplaying their similarities.
- 7 Following the order of the publication of their articles, the fathers were: (1) Tagawa Daikichirô (1869-1947), born in today's Nagasaki prefecture, graduate of the Tôkyô Senmon Gakkô, *Hochi shinbun* journalist, and Lower House Diet member after 1908; (2) Abe Isoo (1865-1949), born in today's Fukuoka prefecture, he was a graduate of Dôshisha University (Kyôto), studied in the United States 1891-95. He became Waseda University professor in 1903, and was first elected to the Diet in 1928; (3) Hayakawa Tetsuya in 1894 translated a book on the fishing industry by German agronomist Adolf Buchenberger, who was an expert on the political economy of agriculture; (4) Sasaki Nobutsuna (1872-1963), born in today's Mie prefecture, graduated from Tôkyô Imperial University,

where he was a lecturer in Japanese literature since 1905; (5) Okaasa Jirô (1868-1944), born in today's Shizuoka prefecture, graduate of Teikoku University, studied in Germany 1891-94 and worked most of his life as a biologist at the Tōkyō Kōtō Shihan Gakkō; (6) Uchigasaki Sakusaburō (1877-1947), born in Miyagi prefecture, graduated from the English department of Tōkyō Imperial University, studied at Oxford in 1911 and on return became a professor at Waseda University, Diet member after 1924.

- 8 The men were: (1) Miyake Yūjirō/Setsurei (1860-1945), born in Ishikawa prefecture, graduated in Philosophy from Tōkyō Imperial University, and writer for major prewar publications (2) Ogawa Mimei/Kensaku (1882-1961), born in Niigata prefecture, graduate of Waseda University; a writer of novels and children's stories, he joined the anarchist writers group in the mid-1920s (3) Tsuchita Kyōson/Tsutomu (1891-1934) born in Niigata prefecture, graduated in Philosophy from Kyōto Imperial University, founder of the cultural magazine Bunka (4) Chino Shōshō/Gitarō (1883-1946), born in Nagano prefecture, graduated in German literature from Tōkyō Imperial University, poet and since 1920 professor for German literature at Keiō University (5) Tokuda Shūsei/Sueo (1871-1943), born in Kanazawa, dropped out of higher school as he was unable to pay tuition after the death of his father, naturalist writer.
- 9 In the same article, Okaasa also called himself an interlocutor (*sōdan aite*).
- 10 On Hatoyama's hopes for paternal presence at mealtimes. Hatoyama Haruko, "Chichioya to kodomo no shitashimi," *Fujin no tomo*, June 1910, vol.3 no.5, pp.185-186.
- 11 Hani herself at times was so busy that she only came home once a week before sunset according to her daughter Setsuko, cited in Saitō, *Hani Motoko*, p.80.
- 12 While Abe did not speak about walking with his children in the 1916 *Fujin no tomo* issue, he refers to this paternal activity in other publications, such as Abe 1929: 338-340.
- 13 Okaasa wrote that he walked various distances depending on whether he took the older or the younger two children.
- 14 Abe himself became leader of the Social Mass Party in the 1930s.
- 15 In their narratives fathers never spoke of being an economic provider for wives and children. To them this role may have been so obvious that they did not want to mention it, or discussing their economic success in public could have appeared too much like bragging. Moreover, they may have linked the provider role to a masculinity which excluded fatherhood. The Meiji Civil Code of 1898 declared that "the head of the house" was to "support" the members of the house (Art. 747), but stated that "a child is subject to the parental power (*shinken*) of the father belonging to the same house (Art. 877)." (Only when the father was dead or gone, could the mother exercise parental power). In theory the head of the house and the father could be a different person, even if in the majority of the families this was not the case. To provide for a family including one's own parents may have been indeed considered to be a male more than a fatherly duty and ability.
- 16 Helen Parkhurst first developed the learning methods of the Dalton Plan 1903 in Massachusetts for one class elementary schools, in 1920 it was adapted to four class schools. It was translated into Japanese by educator Akai Yonekichi, who incidentally contributed an article for the same volume in which the special section on fatherhood appeared. Akai 1926: 27-31
- 17 German philosopher and educator Eduard Spranger (1882-1963) was influential in the German progressive movement of education, especially in the 1920s.
- 18 No article was retrieved for 1917-1926 from the *Shufu no tomo* database with the keyword fatherhood (*fusei*).
- 19 Nagayo Yoshirō, "Hajimete chichi to natta tomo ni," *Fujin no tomo*, July 1920, vol.14 no.7, pp.173-182. Born 1888 in Tōkyō, Nagayo graduated from Tōkyō Imperial University. He participated in the Shirakaba literary movement and adhered to the group's humanistic philosophy even after the emergence of the proletarian literature movement of the 1920s and World War II. He died in 1961.
- 20 Some of the articles on masculinity also discussed fatherhood. Harvard University President Charles Eliot (1834-1926) wrote on the duty of men in the home, which included many elements used in discourse on fatherhood during the 1910s. He called for men to share (*buntan*) in the housework by carrying firewood or water, and "happily" on Sunday men could participate in

improving the home (*katei no kôyô*). The beauty of a happy family was when father and children enjoyed walks and amusements together. Fathers expanded their knowledge and benefited by teaching children about farm work or the family business. Men should be interlocutors (*sôdan aite*) to their wives. *Fujin no tomo*, April 1908, vol.1, no.4, pp.105-107. Male interference in the female domain of the home was the concern of a Japanese author writing in the same year. Sexual division of domestic labor was realized in the most natural way when the men became assistants of their wives as interlocutors (*sôdan aite*) and did not interfere in their work otherwise. If husbands ordered their wives around just like maid-servants (*kahi*), wives would never develop their own abilities, and wives who were left by their husbands, as a result, could not handle family affairs and children's education. Robata 1908: 71-72.

- 21 For a discussion of Hatoyama's role in the development of the concept of "good wife and wise mother" in women's education see Rodd 1991: 176. Hatoyama Haruko was a new urban middle class intellectual. Born as fifth child of a samurai from Matsumoto (today Nagano prefecture), she studied in Tokyo, and later co-founded a higher school for girls, which she managed after 1922. Her husband was the legal scholar and speaker of the Lower House Hatoyama Kazuo, her eldest son Ichirô became prime minister in the 1950s and her second son a famous professor for civil law. Her great-grandchildren Hatoyama Kunio and Yukio in 1996 established the political party Minshutô, which then became the leading opposition party.
- 22 *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1992: 74.

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